

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly,  
My name is Karell Rose and I am a resident of South Windsor CT.

I am writing in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. The passage of this bill would expand HUSKY to undocumented children up to the age of 18 regardless of immigration status.

Access to healthcare is a basic human right. People, let alone, children in our community should not suffer from acute and chronic pain and disease without the ability to get treatment. We need healthcare for everyone from birth to the end of life. Access to preventative health care would save money in terms of health care costs but save needless suffering and loss of human potential. No one should incur crippling debt related to healthcare or fear seeking treatment due to lack of affordability. The cost of simple medications when you are uninsured or underinsured is shocking. Sometimes the cost is hundreds of dollars to thousands of dollars. The brunt of those costs are thrust on those who can least afford it. Undocumented community members often do not have access or the finances for health insurance. Access to healthcare and good health is foundational for healthy thriving individuals and communities.

Our healthcare system does not want to handle patients without insurance because they are not profitable. Patients without insurance are often dismissed or hastily treated and pushed out the door. They are treated without empathy for their pain and suffering. No one deserves this kind of treatment, least of all our most vulnerable community members. When you are undocumented, seeking medical care for your child or yourself is risking exposure. There is fear of COVID infection, deportation, and further economic suffering when seeking medical care. It should not be this way.

Connecticut is considering investing in pandemic readiness. A functional healthcare system with strong preventative health measures for the community is essential in the preparation for the next pandemic. COVID 19 was able to spread and kill as a direct result of a weak and patchwork public health care system. It puts all our communities at risk. It is no coincidence that black and brown communities which struggle with access to healthcare were disproportionately infected and dying from COVID-19. Investment in preventative health care would be an investment in a better collective future. This is even more compelling in young people who can lose years of life from lack of access to care.

Everyone in our community should be able to seek necessary medical care without fear or hesitation. If you are uninsured and undocumented, the stress of worrying about your child's health compounds a socially precarious and vulnerable situation.

I support S.B. No 284, with clear language to extend current HUSKY eligibility rules to all CT residents, regardless of immigration status, and I ask the committee to support this legislation. Thank you for your time.

Karell Rose